

BIBLE NOTES.

A journey through the Holy Land, far from being the disillusionment many people imagine, furnishes a store-house of illustrations to the Bible. At every step one is reminded of some text or some incident recorded in Holy Scripture. The countless blind beggars sitting by the way-side, the lepers outside the gates, the numerous sellers and buyers—not of victims for sacrifice but of rosaries, eikons, and tapers—sitting in the outer court of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, all carry one back to the days of Our Lord. Still it is a most extraordinary thing to see a man carrying a *pitcher* of water (S. Luke xxii. 10). Men carry skins of water—the bottles wherein new and old must not mix, and only *women* bear pitchers. The flat house-tops are often covered with rubbish, amidst which the pigeons roost. "Though ye have lien among the pots yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove." Often, too, one sees "the grass growing upon the house-tops;" even a crop of corn springs up there. Now, as of old, "Man goeth forth to his work . . . until the evening;" and at sunset, as if by magic, the streets are deserted, and present, indeed, "outer darkness," all the windows facing inwards to courtyards.

On our journey we were detained by "four days quarantine:" a Syrian Jew on board was much disappointed at finding it really meant four days—he had calculated that from Thursday evening to Sunday evening was four days, just as the Gospels count from Good Friday to Easter Day as three.

The "garden-tomb" which General Gordon believed to be the true site of Our Lord's burial, if it has not made good its claim, is at least interesting, in that it—like the series of catacombs near it—consists of a chamber in which there are three niches, showing what was meant by the description of the sepulchre as one "wherein never man before was laid." The "Peace be unto you," with which the risen Lord greeted the disciples, gave a newer, deeper meaning to the common every-day salutation still in use.

Manners and customs change not at all in the East. The Bedouin Arab wears a rough, brown-striped hose coat, which doubtless corresponds to the garments of camel's hair worn by Elijah and by S. John the Baptist. Moham-medan fanatics dance in religious processions as did David, and cut themselves with knives and swords as did the priests of Baal. Elijah's question to the latter, "Why do ye halt between two opinions?" is supposed by some to refer to the habit of the Jews of swaying from side to side and "marking time" when engaged in prayer in the corners of the street.

Bargaining goes on as it did in the days of Abraham. A tourist, in idle curiosity, asked his Bedouin escort what he would take for his fine Arab horse, and was answered, "Master, it is yours," even as Ephron answered Abraham—doubtless, had the subject been pursued further, it would have appeared that the "horse is worth so many Napoleons"—"What is that between thee and me."

Little white heaps of stones still form landmarks that may easily be removed. It is a common sight to see twelve yoke of oxen ploughing in the same field. The sheepfolds are entered through a narrow gap, and a shepherd-boy being asked why there was no door to shut, replied simply, "I am the door," meaning that at night he lay down across the opening, so that nothing could get in or out.

"Going down to Jericho" is not a conventional expression; it is one long descent, through desolate country, and it is considered necessary for travellers to have a Bedouin escort lest they should "fall among thieves." The scarcity of trees—those one does see being mostly small, grey-green olives or aloof-looking palms—makes one realize why the Old Testament is so full of praises of "the cedars of Lebanon which Thou hast planted."

Palastine was a fitting home for a religion which considered chiefly *present* rewards and punishments. Careful irrigation and terrace cultivation might do, as they have done in the past, much towards making it a "land flowing with milk and honey," but left to itself it falls back into barrenness. The whole land seems under a curse; the fair cities by the Lake have so far disappeared that most of them have at least two reputed sites—not one stone remains upon another.

But in spite of the desolation and depression that reigns in this unfortunate country, travellers owe something to the conservatism of the Turk, which has prevented any "modernization" of the Holy Land. The impression left on one's mind is, as a recent writer has put it, that it has made the "human facts" of our Lord's life "more a memory than a belief."

IN THE NURSERY DAYS.

The students, who, for the most part, are readers of this Magazine, have of necessity to deal with children emancipated from the nursery. Still I think that some considerations upon the infant period will not be out of place. In that hope, and also in the anticipation of a reasonable forbearance with the views here expressed, I should like to touch on some points, with regard to education prior to the school days, that have come under my observation. It will not be denied that education begins in the nursery. The training, or the want of it, in the early days seems to me likely to help, or hinder, the later work. Assuming, as we ought to do, that the parent, or the person, entrusted with the infant life is anxious to do the best possible for the child, and to lead gradually to the opening out of his mind and lay the basis of future development, one cannot very well begin too soon. It is astonishing at how early a period little traits manifest themselves that if neglected may lead to such serious results, and that if encouraged may be of the utmost value in after life. Every day there is work to be done in the nursery, work of modification, cultivation, and correction.

The one thing we might place first, that is most important during infant life, and throughout life, is the early cultivation of the habit to obey. Obedience is a capacity, and where the capacity is not properly trained it is all the more difficult in later life for the adult to control himself wisely. More than anything else obedience is likely to make for happiness

in the home life. The child who disobeys, or is allowed to dispute every order, has the power to make the home most unhappy. Disobedience is a very serious fault, and the desire to have his own way seems an inherent one, so that the earlier it is tackled the better it will be. Obviously the more will power a child has got the more difficult it will be to teach him to submit to control, therefore all the more necessity to attempt this from the beginning. No one desires to weaken the will power of a child, but I contend that to teach it implicit obedience will really strengthen that power, because the process naturally puts it upon a nobler level. It is quite possible to make a child consciously obey as early as seven or eight months old. The development of children varies, few things are more variable, but the infant, who can neither talk nor walk, can understand the word "no," and it should always be uttered firmly yet kindly, and never angrily. This leads to the point that a command should never be given thoughtlessly. Even an infant can appreciate something of justice and injustice in an order, and the reasonableness of it. But obedience to an order once given should be insisted upon. A child prevented from doing a thing one day must not be allowed to do it the next day. The same things must always be prohibited or allowed, unless there should be an obvious alteration of circumstances which will usually appeal also to the child's mind, because he is a very reasonable animal. Injustice grates on him instinctively, and inconsistency confuses him. In this connection the wisdom of changing the line of thought is very apparent. You give your order and there it should end. But lest the child should criticise, argue, or fret, turn his attention to something else; the lure seldom fails.

To be able to follow the working of the little mind needs the most constant watchfulness and sympathy. Nurses may be here to-day and gone to-morrow, but the parents are always there, and should not allow the little charges entrusted to them to be wholly looked after by others. No one can fitly take the place of the loving parent, and no one can, because the parent is the final law of the child, better recognise when the little one is to be reprimanded, encouraged, or guided. Harshness to children is always a mistake. Sometimes one needs to be sharp with a child, but to be harsh to him wounds his tender little mind, and we do not